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## Mayor Dixon Welcomes 2009 Fellows

The Baltimore City Mayoral Fellowship places recent college graduates and graduate students in city agencies during a prestigious 10-week summer fellowship. During the course of the program, Fellows undertake targeted projects that address pressing issues in city government. Fellows gain valuable, hands-on working experience and agencies benefit from the energy and knowledge that fellows bring with them. The culminating event is a series of presentations whereby fellows are able to present their findings and provide recommendations to Mayor Dixon personally, along with cabinet officials and invited guests. This year, twenty fellows were chosen from a competitive pool of nearly 200 applicants nationwide.

The fellows' first day began on June 8<sup>th</sup>, when they arrived at City Hall for an introductory breakfast and orientation from Program Director Antonio Hayes, Denise Schoolcraft and Beatrice Tripps. Taking in the scene, Criminal Justice Intern Jessica Turrall offered, "I am honored to be so young, yet still be in a position where I can truly make a change in the community I interact with everyday, all while being seen as a peer among Baltimore City officials."



Following their orientation, the Mayor joined fellows for lunch in the Executive Conference Room. Mayor Dixon personally greeted each participant and offered words of encouragement to the group, many of whom she hopes will one day pursue careers in city government. After a group photo with the Mayor, fellows reported to their respective agencies to learn the details of their projects and meet staffs with whom they will be working. Participating agencies include the Fire Department, Health Department, Department of Recreation and Parks, Department of Finance, Office of Media Relations, and many others.

While fellows work primarily in their respective agencies, they continue to meet weekly as part of a Wednesday “Speaker Series”, where many of the city’s top minds join them for interactive discussion and debate—from Deputy Mayors to community organizers, CEO’s and the Police Commissioner. This week, the fellows heard from Deputy Mayors Chris Thomaskutty, Salima Siler Marriott and Assistant Deputy Mayor Carolyn Blakeney.

Marriott, who works with Community and Human Development, with a “focus on the human development aspect”, explained her department’s focus on development from infancy to elderly care. “Indicators” such as infant mortality guide their program focus, so that they can best address discrepancies between living conditions and life expectancies of neighborhoods around the city. The

program models itself after the Harlem Children’s Zone, Marriott explained.



Blakeney, from Neighborhood and Economic Development, stressed that Economic Development agencies should unite city agencies around a common goal. Blakeney works to both attract new businesses and retain those that are already here. One of her roles is to keep agencies focused so that they continue to meet goals set by Mayor Dixon. When fellows asked about gentrification, Blakene explained that Economic development does not mean gentrification. Mariott offered her philosophy towards agents of gentrification, saying, “If we are

not interested in human development, then who are you doing economic development for?”

Finally, Christopher Thomaskutty—Director for administration and Director of the Citistat performance management system, closed out the session. An Alabama native, Thomaskutty loves Baltimore for being a place where someone can really make a huge difference and “work on things that matter to people.” He added, “If you can shoulder the weight, you will get a lot of responsibility.” Through his two roles, Thomaskutty explained the many ways he is charged with cutting through media sensationalism to present the facts, citing the Inner Harbor and its many wonderful offerings. Thomaskutty diverged from discussing the details of his job, however, to offer the fellows some points of advice.

1. Don’t go straight to graduate school. Get a job, get experience, take a break, and save some money.
2. Grades are important, but experience is more important.
3. Don’t be afraid to take a great job, even if the pay isn’t great.
4. Commit yourself. Find the thing that makes you mad and let that motivate you to find the solution..

Each of these 20 bright minds is sure to bring fresh ideas to the City of Baltimore.

## Hopkins Senior improving Baltimore, one community at a time

From Detroit, Michigan to Baltimore, Maryland, Blake Edwards loves city life. His transition to Baltimore 3 years ago was a decision he made based on the “unique personality” of the city and its similarity to Detroit. He admires that Baltimore “has a distinct culture that anyone can share throughout the city, no matter in what part of Baltimore you live.” Blake is a rising senior at Johns Hopkins seeking a degree in Public Health. However, to the surprise of many, he has no interest in practicing medicine. He wants to use the knowledge gained in a life of public service in Baltimore and Detroit.



Blake was forced by the requirement of a Junior standing or higher to wait one year before he could apply for the program. He found out about the Fellowship on the Baltimore City website during his sophomore year at Hopkins. He was ecstatic about the opportunity to make a tangible difference for city residents. Blake’s placement is in the Office of Community and Human Development. Working with Deputy Mayor Salima Siler-Marriott, he explained, “My goal is to help Baltimore City streamline services to provide better access, especially to youth in the city.”

Blake started his project by determining which city neighborhoods are in need of Community and Human Development. Blake has identified 12 out of 55 neighborhoods, and is now looking at statistics regarding birth outcomes and quality of life in those 12 neighborhoods. In order for his project to progress, Edwards must identify to what extent various services are being used in the neighborhoods, and what services from the government they need to develop into communities.

So far, everyone has been more than willing to help and, according to Edwards, he is greatly looking forward to working with many different agencies to address the needs of the neighborhoods. The biggest challenge he envisions for this project is designating means to measure improvements. He notes that it will be important to recognize any change, large or small, in the communities. “The key success is maintaining access to the services provided by the city,” says Edwards.

When asked what he likes most, Blake stated, “The best part of the program is the freedom to recommend anything I think will work and being able to go in the direction I want to with my project.” He wants to take the work he does in Baltimore and use it in Detroit. He believes he is one of the few people willing to go into Detroit to revitalize a once thriving city.

When he is not thinking of ways to improve the quality of life in communities in Baltimore and Detroit, Blake enjoys playing basketball and tennis. A member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, he is also the President of his school’s chapter. Focused and determined to succeed, Blake Edwards strives to positively impact those around him wherever he finds himself.



## Baltimore Resident a Valuable Asset to Fire Department Anniversary

With the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Baltimore City Fire Department approaching, this Mayoral Fellow has his work cut out for him. Over the course of a 10-week fellowship with the Baltimore City Fire Department, Christopher Borowski seeks to ramp up the Department's public presence and increase recruitment efforts.

Chris has been a resident of Baltimore nearly his entire life. Currently a senior at nearby UMBC, Chris is majoring in political science. "The political science major is so diverse that it can be applied in a multitude of careers—from international relations to state and local politics, and legal analysis," Chris explains. After graduating from UMBC, Chris plans to work as a seasonal police officer in Ocean City before attending law school. Eventually, he hopes to work with the State's Attorney Office in Baltimore.



This summer through his Mayoral Fellowship, Chris will work with Chief Cartwright in the Department's Public Information Office. As the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fire Department approaches, Chris will work to produce press briefings, decals and banners. Approaching the July 25<sup>th</sup> ceremony at War Memorial Plaza, Chris will further work to develop event planning guides, speaker itineraries, and more. This is his first job in a public information office, and he is eager to tackle new tasks such as event promotion. Such a large event with complex logistics and the participation of several departments represents an exciting challenge. "150 years is nothing to scoff at!" says Chris of the Department's long-standing legacy.

Chris is also an accomplished member of the Boy Scouts of America. "I am very proud to say I am an Eagle Scout...I've met guys that say I *was* an Eagle Scout. No, you *are* an Eagle Scout!" He is also an avid outdoorsman.

Chris looks forward to being part of such a monumental occasion, particularly given his admiration of Baltimore City. "When people look at Baltimore, they see the problems. I see the great things," Chris says, reflecting on the place he calls home. "There are so many energetic forces driving public policy." People involved in public service are "experienced in their careers and have a connection to the citizens, to get what [the residents of Baltimore] want."

## Passion for Baltimore Found in America's Midwest

In May of 2010, Ben Visser will have attained both his J.D. and Masters in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Iowa. This summer, however, he is taking a break to join the Baltimore City Mayoral Fellowship at the recommendation of a former fellow. The past fellow told Ben that the BCMF would provide him with “real projects and responsibilities” and, in his first week on the job, Ben already sees that to be true. While he remains unsure about his future career plans, he knows there are many opportunities in city government that join his interest in planning and transportation with his legal background.

This summer, Ben is working with the Census 2010 Complete Count Committee. The goal of the Committee is to engage all Baltimore citizens in the build-up to the 2010 Census. This effort stems from the finding that, among comparable cities, Baltimore has the lowest mail-in response rate for the census. The Committee aims to show Baltimoreans that the census is a safe and worthwhile process by including and encouraging community-based groups to take part. Examples of these subcommittees include faith-based organizations, limited English proficiency groups, elderly, homeless and women's advocacy groups.



The census is critical to City government because it determines how much funding comes from the Federal and State governments. “Federal and state funds allocate at least two thousand dollars per person,” Ben notes. Moreover, “neighborhood organizations and nonprofits use the data when making funding decisions.” While Ben will not be able to see the process through to the census, he will be instrumental in developing a timeline for implementation and identifying target areas, such as those identified as “low mail-in areas”.

In addition to all that he is learning as part of the Complete Count Committee, Ben is also taking away valuable lessons from the Wednesday speaker series. He sees firsthand the devotion of city employees, and he is impressed with the impact of the projects and mentorship given to fellows. “The projects you work on and things you accomplish make a difference because there are problems to solve, and that really resonated with me.”

Outside of the BCMF, Ben looks forward to taking advantage of the many water sports in the area. He explains, “I’m really excited to do some sailing while I’m out here. I’m from Iowa, so I’ve done some limited sailing, but I love it!” He also hopes to have an opportunity to hike in the mountains nearby.

Ben is working with Dr. Seema Iyer, Chief of the Research and Strategic planning division within the Department of Planning. “We are thrilled to have Ben working with us on the City's 2010 Census Complete Count Campaign. His planning background, energy and willingness to learn will help us launch several initiatives that will ensure all Baltimoreans are counted during the Census process next year,” Dr. Iyer proclaimed about her Mayoral Fellow.

## Finance Fellow strives to give back to Baltimore



Baltimore City native Raemond Parrott was attracted to the Baltimore Mayoral Fellows program to “make a difference” and impact city residents in a positive way. Raemond is no stranger to city government. His mother has worked in the Housing Department for over 20 years, and he spent countless hours by her desk in City Hall as a young child. He has developed a love for the City, and will work to make it better.

Parrott is a graduate of Williams College in Massachusetts and a current student at Duke Law School in North Carolina. His goal is to return to

Baltimore City and practice in the private sector with the ultimate goal of opening a private equity home for low-income families. “All the equity firms make sure big companies keep making money, but no one helps low-income families pool their money and make smart choices,” Parrott said. With that in mind, Raemond wants to serve the people of the city that he calls home.

Raemond was introduced to the Fellows Program through a 2003 Mayoral Fellow who went on to become a speechwriter for Governor Martin O’Malley. The relationship with City employees, access to resources and the ability to do substantive work for Baltimore attracted Raemond to the program.

His project for the Finance Department is decriminalizing parking tickets. Baltimore City has a total of \$130 million worth of unpaid parking fines. Currently, failure to pay a parking ticket is a criminal offense. However, there are many issues that surface by placing these individuals through the judicial system. Most notably, there is no way to enforce payment of outstanding balances. If it becomes a civil matter, proof beyond a reasonable doubt is not needed, and a settlement for payments is also an option.

The ultimate goal of the project is to create an Administrative Hearing Board under the Finance Department that will hear the case and decide an outcome. Currently, Raemond is in the research stage of the process. Cities such as New York and D.C. have decriminalized parking tickets, and he is analyzing the benefits and risks of changing the system here in Baltimore. The hardest challenge so far for Raemond is choosing which approach to take. He explained that there are multiple factors in setting up the board such as revenue, costs and project management timelines. Overall, Raemond is excited about the opportunity to recommend a program that can bring millions of dollars in revenue to the City.

In his spare time, Raemond enjoys sleeping and reading quarterly statements from Fortune 500 companies. He admires that the City is making an effort to recruit and retain young talent to address the issues of the present and to pave the way to a brighter future. Raemond acknowledged the Mayor’s administration for the action it takes to change Baltimore City, and he appreciates the opportunity to be a part of this great change.

## *Upcoming Events*

June 22 <sup>nd</sup>	June 24 <sup>th</sup>	July 2 <sup>nd</sup>
Greening Project at the Brooklyn O'Malley Recreation Center	Speaker Series: Anna Cluster from Live Baltimore	CCTV Visit and Police Ride-Along



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